

# Report of the Monitoring Adolescents in Risky Situations (MARS) Project: Findings from the 1999 Out-of-Home Youth Survey

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## **Investigators**



Robert W. Strack, Ph.D. MBA  
Cheryl Alexander, RN, Ph.D.

*Center for Adolescent Health Promotion and Disease Prevention  
School of Hygiene and Public Health  
Johns Hopkins University*



Christine Weston, PhD  
Naomi Tomoyasu, PhD  
Liza Solomon, MHS, DrPH

*Maryland AIDS Administration  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

A Collaborative Project of the:

Center for Adolescent Health Promotion and Disease Prevention  
Maryland AIDS Administration, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

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**Report of the Monitoring Adolescents in  
Risky Situations (MARS) Project:  
Findings from the 1999 Out-of-Home Youth Survey**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**A**dolescents who are placed at shelters, residential centers or community-based outreach programs often arrive with histories of non-supportive home environments, early and high-risk sexual and substance-use experiences, and runaway, homeless and street life experiences that broaden their exposure to HIV infection (Slonim-Nevo, Ozawa and Asunder, 1991; Ensign and Santelli, 1997). Nationally nearly one-fifth of HIV cases are reported among young adults (CDC, 2000). The result has been that HIV/AIDS has become the sixth leading cause of death among young persons aged 15 to 24 years and the fifth leading cause of death among people aged 25 to 44 years (CDC 1999). Given the average period of time from HIV infection to the development of AIDS is 10 years, most young adults are infected during their adolescence. It is estimated that about 25% of all individuals currently living with HIV were infected during their adolescent years and that at least half of all new HIV infections in the United States are among people under 25 (CDC, 1999; NIAID, 2000). This is compounded by the fact that many teens who are infected with HIV are not aware of their infection (ONAP, 2000). Because many individuals are likely to become infected during their teenage years, surveillance of adolescent risk-taking and protective behaviors is vital to prevention.

Out-of-home  
youth are among  
the populations  
at greatest risk  
for HIV

Currently many states collect annual behavioral risk data on adolescents using the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Kann, Kinchen, Williams et al. 1998), and in Maryland, the Maryland Adolescent Survey. However, these surveys are not designed to capture the high-risk circumstances of "out-of-home" (systems, runaway, homeless and street) youth. In response to the health risks faced by this population of youth, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supported the Monitoring Adolescents in Risky Situations (MARS) Project conducted collaboratively by the Maryland AIDS Administration and the Center for Adolescent Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at Johns Hopkins University.

The Out-of-Home Youth Survey (OHYS) was developed as part of the MARS Project to assess the HIV risk and protective behaviors of "out-of home" adolescents (14-21 years of age) residing in youth residential homes and short term shelters that serve systems, runaway and homeless youth throughout the State of Maryland. The final OHYS contained 93 questions, some with multiple components, covering a variety of topics relevant to youth in out-of-home situations. Survey categories consisted of 1) demographics, 2) living situations and personal history, 3) relationships with parents and others, 4) suicidal ideation and attempt, 5) alcohol and other drug use, 6) sexual behavior, experiences and attitudes, and 7) HIV/AIDS testing and perception of risk. Between July and August of 1999, the survey was administered to 336 youth between 14 and 21 years of age in group homes and shelters throughout the State of Maryland.

This report provides an opportunity to consider the high-risk behaviors of youth in group homes and shelters throughout Maryland. It may also foster a better understanding of how home and environmental factors contribute the vulnerability of this segment of our youth population. This sensitive and unprecedented study highlights some of the real needs of these youth. It is hoped that the findings of this study might increase awareness, provide insight, and be useful to the current and ongoing efforts aimed at improving the health and well-being of our vulnerable adolescents.

### ***Who are these youth?***

Respondents of this survey were 66% male and 34% female. The majority of respondents described themselves as African American (63%), followed by White (20%), and Native American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Pacific Islander (17%). When asked about sexual orientation, 89% indicated that they were heterosexual, with the remaining 11% indicating they were homosexual, bisexual or not sure. Most respondents, 64%, indicated that they were enrolled and regularly attending school with 16% indicating that they had graduated and 20% indicating that they had dropped out or were not attending regularly.

### ***Why did they leave home?***

Just over half of these youth were removed from their homes by a public agency (53%). Fifty-two percent of the youth surveyed indicated that they had run away from home (including family, group or foster home) in the past 12 months. Youth respondents also indicated a host of other reasons for leaving their homes including: having been abused verbally (33%), physically (28%), or sexually (13%); being outwardly rejected by the family including being given up (26%) or forced out (25%); feeling unsafe (25%), unloved (24%) or unaccepted (6%); and being exposed to constant fighting or arguing in the home environment (33%), and parents who used drugs (23%).

*Hostile home environments were reported by many youths as their reason for leaving home*

Nearly half of the youth (47%) reported that they had spent at least one night in the past 12 months ‘hanging out all night with friends’, and 12% to 17% reported spending at least one night ‘in a car’, ‘on the street’, or ‘in a stranger’s home’.

### ***What kind of social support do these youth have?***

About half of the youth in this survey were raised by their biological mothers and one quarter were raised by their biological fathers. Almost 20% indicated being raised by both their biological parents. While the majority of youth said they felt close to the woman who raised them, only half felt close to the man who raised them. Over 4 out of 5 youth reported ‘close’ or ‘very close’ relationships with other family members such as sisters, brothers and grandparents. About half the youth said that there is always an adult or family member that they can go to for help, and about a third said that they have someone to turn to some of the time. However, 12% of the youth felt that they never had a family member to turn to during times of trouble and 6% felt that they had no adult to turn to for help with a problem.

## *What are some of their risky behaviors?*

### *Sexual Activity*

The vast majority of youth who participated in this survey were sexually active with 85% reporting having had engaged in insertive sex, either vaginal or anal (87% with the inclusion of oral sex). Most of the respondents reported having had sex for the first time at a very early age. Over one-third (35%) of those who reported ever having had vaginal or anal sex had done so at age 11 or younger. And 3 out of 4 of the youth surveyed (73%) had had vaginal or anal sex *before* turning 14. The number of partners in their lifetime was also very high; of those who reported having sexual intercourse, half (49%) had had six or more partners in their lifetime, including 22% with six to ten partners and 16% with more than 20 partners. Of all the sexually active youth, over half had had sex in the past month and 42% reported having multiple partners in the past three months. When asked about their reasons for having sex, over 90% of the sexually active youth indicated that they have sex for ‘pleasure’ and nearly three quarters indicated that they have sex because they ‘were in love’. At the same time, a large number of youth indicated that they have had sex for ‘clothes’, ‘money’, ‘drugs’, ‘food’, or ‘a place to stay’ (ranging between 5% and 17% of sexually active youth). In addition, one in five females and nearly one in ten males indicated that they had sex ‘to get pregnant’. Among the sexually active females surveyed, 36% reported having been pregnant one or more times.

*87% of the youth surveyed indicated that they have engaged in some form of sexual activity*

### *Forced Sex*

A significant portion of the sexually active youth reported being forced to have sex on one or more occasions. These youth were most likely to have been forced to have sex with an adult they know (21%); however a large number of youth also reported being forced to have sex with a friend (18%), a boyfriend or girlfriend (18%), a family member (15%), and/or a stranger (14%). When asked about forced sexual encounters while they or their partner were drunk or high, 14% indicated that they had forced someone who was drunk or high to have sex, and 27% had been forced, themselves, to have sex while they were drunk or high.

### *Condom Use*

Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they used condoms in the last year. Slightly over a third of the sexually active youth reported using condoms consistently (every time), and one-fifth said they used condoms more than half the time. On the other hand, 44% of the youth reported using condoms only about half the time or less with nearly one fifth of the youth indicating that they *never* use a condom. Just over half of the youth indicated having used a condom the last time they had sex. Finally, among those youth that have had anal intercourse, 70% have had anal sex at least once without a condom.

When asked about reasons for not using a condom, 42% responded that they didn't 'like the way they feel'. About 40% of the respondents said they did not use condoms because they 'didn't have one at the time', because they 'trusted their partner', or because they were 'too caught up in the moment'. About one quarter of the youth said they did not use condoms because their partner 'doesn't like them', and 20% said that they 'wanted to have a baby'.

### *Sexually Transmitted Infections*

One third of the sexually active youth had gone to see a doctor because they 'thought' they had a sexually transmitted infection. Seventeen percent of the youth report being told by a doctor, nurse, or health worker that they had a sexually transmitted infection. Chlamydia was the most commonly diagnosed STI, followed by herpes, gonorrhea, syphilis, and genital warts. No respondents reported having been told that they had HIV infection or AIDS.

### *Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Use*

The youth in this study commonly used tobacco, alcohol and marijuana. In terms of tobacco use, 20% of youth smoked every day and 53% had smoked at least once during the month prior to the survey. Three quarters of the sample reported having engaged in drinking alcohol to some extent during their life. Over two-thirds of the youth had tried marijuana at some

*53% of the youth  
reported smoking tobacco  
and 30% reported using  
marijuana in the 30 days  
prior to the survey*

point in their lifetime with 38% of the youth reporting that they had used marijuana 20 or more times, and 22% indicated having used marijuana 100 times or more. Except for hallucinogenic use (16%), other drugs had been used to much lesser extents over their lifetimes: cocaine (8%), inhalants (8%), methamphetamines (6%), heroin (4%), and steroids (3%). Youth were also asked questions about their experiences involving

alcohol and drug use. One third of youth indicated that they regretted something that happened to them while drunk or high. Youth also reported having blacked out (25%) and having been in a physical fight (35%) while drunk or high. When asked about drugs in their home environments, over one quarter reported that 'drugs are part of my home environment', and 59% reported that 'some of my family members use drugs'. At the same time, three quarters reported that their 'parents have told them not to use drugs' and that their parents would be 'concerned if they were using drugs'.

### *Suicide*

One quarter of the youth surveyed had seriously considered suicide in the past twelve months. Of these, 68% had actually attempted it at least once in the past year. Alarming, those who did attempt suicide in the last year make up 20% of the entire MARS study population.

## ***How do these young people view their risk of HIV/AIDS?***

A high proportion of the youth surveyed (69%) expressed concern about getting AIDS and nearly half (45%) acknowledged that they have done things in their past that has put them at high risk for AIDS. When asked about the likelihood that they or someone they know would get AIDS, one third of the sexually active youth said that is at least ‘somewhat likely’ that they would get AIDS and two-thirds said that it is at least ‘somewhat likely’ that someone they know will get AIDS. Among sexually active youth, 63% indicated that they had been tested for HIV, 80% of whom got the results of their test. When asked the question: ‘How much do you know about AIDS or HIV infection?’ nearly half of all the youth surveyed said ‘I wish I knew more’.

*A majority of the youth surveyed indicated concern about getting AIDS (69%) and nearly half agreed with the statement ‘Things I have done in the past have put me at high risk of getting AIDS.’*

## ***Closing Thoughts***

The findings of this survey confirm that the lives of these ‘out-of-home’ youth are characterized by a lack of family support, physical and emotional abuse, drug use and unsafe sexual behaviors. The experiences and behaviors of these youth place them at high risk for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. Not only had the majority of the youth surveyed reported being sexually active, many also reported experiencing sex at very young ages, being sexually abused, having multiple sexual partners, and inadequately using protection. On the positive side, the findings indicate that these youth are approachable. While this is a group that has been rejected, abandoned or abused by parents or other adults, a large number of respondents indicated trusting their parents and other adults (63% and 58% respectively). Furthermore, these youth indicate a desire for obtaining more information about HIV/AIDS. Many are concerned since they sense that they are at risk themselves. These beliefs and attitudes provide the necessary fertile ground for prevention interventions among this highly vulnerable sub-population of adolescents.

Given the complex natures of these youths’ lives, there are no clear or simple solutions. Clearly their risk of HIV and AIDS is high. However, other issues such as family support, home stability, emotional anchoring and positive modeling are also undeniable factors that influence their behaviors, their health and their well-being. At a minimum, educational programs and interventions need to be developed to address the specific and immediate needs of these out-of-home youth. Ideally, creative strategies should be supported and/or developed that will provide the opportunities needed for these youth to address the challenges they face, advance developmentally and become productive and healthy citizens.

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Center for Adolescent Health Promotion  
and Disease Prevention  
School of Hygiene and Public Health  
Johns Hopkins University



Maryland AIDS Administration  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

# 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

*Out-of-home youth  
are among the  
populations at  
greatest risk for HIV*

Adolescents who are placed at shelters, residential centers or community-based outreach programs often arrive with histories of non-supportive home environments, early and high-risk sexual and substance-use experiences, and runaway, homeless and street life experiences that broaden their exposure to HIV infection (Slonim-Nevo, Ozawa and Asunder, 1991; Ensign and Santelli, 1997). Nationally and in the State of Maryland nearly one-fifth of AIDS cases are reported among young adults (CDC, 1994). The result has been that HIV/AIDS has become the sixth leading cause of death among young persons aged 15 to 24 years and the fifth leading cause of death among people aged 25 to 44 years (CDC 1999). Given the average period of time from HIV infection to the development of AIDS is 10 years, most young adults are infected during their adolescence. It is estimated that about 25% of all individuals currently living with HIV were infected during their adolescent years and that at least half of all new HIV infections in the United States are among people under 25 (CDC, 1999; NIAID, 2000). This is compounded by the fact that many teens who are infected with HIV are not aware of their infection (ONAP, 2000). Because many individuals are likely to become infected during their teenage years, surveillance of adolescent risk-taking and protective behaviors is vital to prevention.

Currently many states collect annual behavioral risk data on adolescents using the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Kann, Kinchen, Williams et.al., 1998), and in Maryland, the Maryland Adolescent Survey. However, these surveys are not designed to capture the high-risk circumstances of "out-of-home" (systems, runaway, homeless, and street) youth. In response to the health risks faced by this population of youth, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supported the M.A.R.S. (Monitoring Adolescents in Risky Situations) Project, which was conducted by the Maryland AIDS Administration and the Center for Adolescent Health

Promotion and Disease Prevention at Johns Hopkins University to assess the risks faced by a portion of “out-of-home” youth in the State of Maryland.

The principal goals of the M.A.R.S project has been:

1. To develop an instrument that can be used to assess the HIV risk and protective behaviors of "out-of-home" adolescents, ages 14-21, who receive services in residential homes and community-based programs that serve runaway and homeless youth.
2. To administer the developed survey to youth in residential group homes and shelters throughout the State of Maryland.
3. To report finding to collaborative partners, relevant state agencies, participating group homes and shelters and through published literature.

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS), designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has been used on a national basis to monitor the behaviors of young people most likely to affect their health (Kann, Kinchen, Williams et.al, 1998). The survey addresses sexual, substance use and violent behaviors in addition to behaviors relevant to nutrition, driving, and exercise. This self-administered survey is designed to be implemented by states in school settings with representative samples of high school students. Since its implementation in 1990, analyses of state and national YRBS data have yielded important findings regarding the risk profiles of adolescents and have generated information used to monitor cohort changes in risk behaviors over time.

Despite its overall utility for adolescent health, by restricting its sample to schools, the YRBS surveillance system excludes adolescents who are not regularly attending or enrolled in school, thus eliminating youth who are likely to have a higher prevalence of risk behaviors than regularly attending high school students. This downward bias in the prevalence estimates provided by the YRBS for high risk youth has been supported by results from a comparative analyses conducted on the YRBS Supplement to the 1992 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), a household

sample, and the 1992 YRBS (CDC, 1994). Prevalence estimates for several risk behaviors, including substance use were significantly higher for out of school adolescents in the household samples than for high school students in the school-based sample. Furthermore, adolescents who were not living at home were not included in the 1992 YRBS supplement to the National Health Interview Survey. Thus, there are no national estimates of risk behaviors or protective behaviors for this particular sub-group at high risk for HIV. Similarly, in Maryland, there are no behavior surveillance procedures for adolescents in high-risk settings.

The risky behaviors and high-risk environments of these out-of-home youth are not captured in items designed for school-based populations. In order to develop effective HIV prevention efforts, it is important not only to obtain data on the frequency of involvement in risk behaviors and monitor changes over time, but also to collect systematic information regarding the contexts in which these behaviors occur and the measures taken by adolescents to protect themselves from exposure to HIV infection.

Using the YRBS as a foundation, the MARS project team set out to create a modified version of a youth risk behavior instrument that would be sensitive to the experiences of youth from higher than normal risk environments. The first step in this process was the formation of a Steering Committee made up of representatives from collaborating agencies and representatives from youth serving agencies in Maryland. Using the advice of those who work with this population, it was decided that any developed instrument should not only measure behaviors, but should also attempt to consider attitudes, and contextual situations surrounding the risky behaviors of this population of youth. While it is recognized that a self-administered instrument is limited in its ability to identify and measure the complex attitudes and environments influencing youth, the developed Out-of-Home Youth Survey (OHYS) does attempt to tap into these domains.

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## 2.METHODS

### Overview

The activities of the MARS project can be grouped into the various phases of the project.

#### *Preliminary Phase:*

The preliminary phase involved the development of a research plan, the formation of a steering committee, and the securing of approval from various Institutional Review Boards. In preparation for the next phase, a focus group guide was developed, focus group leaders were recruited and trained and the cultivation of relationships with various youth group homes and shelters in the state was begun.

#### *Phase One:*

The first research phase of the project involved the development of a pilot instrument which was accomplished through a review of existing literature on youth in high risk settings, the conduct of focus groups with youth in selected group homes and shelters, and the development of a pilot instrument.

#### *Phase Two:*

The second phase of the project entailed the pilot testing of the preliminary instrument. During this phase the instrument was first presented and reviewed by the Center for Adolescent Health's Youth Advisory Committee, who provided feedback and recommended changes. The revised instrument was then administered to a sampling of youth in group homes and shelters. Cognitive interviews were conducted to gauge item understanding and face/content validity.

#### *Phase Three:*

The third phase of the project was the administration of the final instrument to youth in group homes and shelters throughout the state along with data entry, analysis and reporting.

## **A. Preliminary Phase**

The steering committee for the MARS project included directors and staff members from youth group homes, state health department representatives from the Maryland AIDS Administration, a representative from the National Network for Youth, a national organization that advocates on behalf of youth, and members from the Center for Adolescent Health. The Steering Committee provided professional guidance and insight during the first phases of the project through group and individual meetings. During the early steering committee meetings it was determined that a survey of youth that are in “out-of-home” situations should not only be tailored to their behavior, but should also attempt to tap into the environmental and contextual influences that are beyond their direct control. It was the committee’s view that a survey that is focused solely on health compromising behaviors would not provide a complete picture into the lives of this population of youth.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey served as a starting point for the construction of the OHYS. A review of the literature revealed that the primary focus of most studies has been the attitudes and behaviors of youth that places them at risk. In order to address the potential environmental and contextual influences of this population of youth, a focus group guide was developed that could be used to begin to understand the domains that should be included in the final instrument.

The focus group guide was broken into two sessions. The first focus group session covered: 1) an introduction to the project and each other, 2) youth assets, 3) general health issues, 4) risky activities and situations related to alcohol and other drugs, and violence, and 5) a conclusion section. The second focus group session covered: 1) a re-introduction of the project, 2) HIV/AIDS and STD and related educational messages, 3) sexual behaviors and attitudes, 4) living situations, and 5) a conclusion that included general questions about eliciting information from youth. The complete focus group guides can be found in the appendix along with a participant survey.

Male and female focus group leaders and recorders were recruited from personnel hired during previous projects at the Center for Adolescent Health along with graduate students recruited from Hopkins graduate school programs. Training sessions were held with focus group leaders and recorders prior to being sent into the field.

In preparation for primary data collection, the MARS project needed to gain approval from several review committees. Review and approval of the project was gained from the Johns Hopkins University's Institutional Review Board, as well as from the IRB's of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maryland Department of Human Resources, and the Maryland Social Services Administration. In addition, letters of collaboration were signed by the numerous participating group homes and shelters before data collection was conducted. Due to the multi-phased nature of the project and the requirements of these numerous agencies the timeline for this project was extended beyond its initial intent.

## **B. Phase One**

The principal goal of the first phase of the MARS project was the development of an instrument that can be used to assess the HIV risk and protective behaviors of "out-of-home" adolescents 14-21 years of age. "Out-of-home" youth has been defined for this project as youth that have experienced situations or episodes that have placed them, voluntarily or involuntarily, outside of the care of a parent or relative. "Out-of-home" youth can include homeless, runaway, throwaway, systems, incarcerated and street youth.

### *Literature Review.*

A literature review of Medline and PsychInfo databases was conducted in search of relevant research findings regarding HIV risk and protective factors of "out-of-home" youth. The literature review examines the methods used to define and assess this population. Information extracted from studies published during 1988-1998 included: study design, setting, instrument type, and major findings. The review's findings were used to assist in the development of survey questions. Research authors

and study coordinators were contacted to request instruments they used so that appropriate questions from current youth risk-behavior instruments could be examined for the MARS instrument.

#### *Focus groups*

Through a series of five focus groups (3 female and 2 male groups) conducted with agency youth in August and September of 1997 a range of issues were identified for inclusion in the development of a pilot instrument. The purpose of the focus groups was to obtain information about existing norms regarding involvement in high-risk behaviors and the circumstances in which adolescents are at increased risk for HIV infection. The following table provides a few characteristics of the participants of the focus group sessions.

**Table 2.1**  
**Focus Group Participant Characteristics**

	Female (n=18)	Male (n=7)	Total (n=25)
Average Age	14.8	15.3	15.0
Race			
Caucasian	22%	29%	24%
African-American	50%	57%	52%
Asian	6%	---	4%
Mixed	22%	14%	20%
Average number of places lived in past month	1.8	1.5	1.7
Average number of places lived in past 6 months	3.2	2.8	2.9

As table 2.1 indicates, the average age for focus group participants was 15 years of age with half identifying themselves as African American, one fifth as Caucasian and on fifth as mixed. The youth indicated that they had lived an average of 1.7 places in the past month and 2.9 places in the past 6 months, a finding which provides evidence of the unstable nature of these youth's lives.

The taped focus groups were transcribed during October and November of 1997. The focus group transcripts were coded during January and February of 1998

and analyzed during March by two graduate assistants and the project coordinator. The insights gained during the coding and analysis of the focus groups were instrumental in the development of the first draft of the pilot instrument.

### **C. Phase Two**

A research plan was developed during April of 1998 outlining the second phase of the study. The primary focus of the second phase of the MARS project was the continued modification of the survey based on literature review findings, focus group transcripts and the instrument pilot testing. A pilot version was completed and prepared for IRB review during April 1998.

#### *Review of Pilot Instrument by Youth Advisory Committee.*

The Youth Advisory Council (Y.A.C.) of the Center for Adolescent Health, made up of youth between the ages of 13 and 19 from the Baltimore City area, was approached to solicit their views, insight and expertise in assessing the items selected for the pilot instrument. An eight-member panel of the Y.A.C. engaged in an hour-long group discussion with the project coordinator regarding the roots and stems of the survey's items. The suggestions offered by the Y.A.C. were then summarized and used to further modify the instrument. The insight and candor offered by the Y.A.C. was found to be very valuable to the development of the final pilot instrument.

#### *Pilot testing with cognitive interviews*

The OHYS was pilot tested with 19 youth (10 boys and 9 girls) from four groups homes and shelters during August/September of 1998. Administration of the survey was followed by cognitive interviews, which attempted to assess the face/content validity of the survey's items. The completion time for the 80-question survey ranged between 20 and 40 minutes with the follow-up interviews ranging between 40 and 70 minutes. Interviews with the participants during the pilot phase were instrumental in the adjustments made to survey items and in the overall modification of the final instrument. Pilot participant characteristics are shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2**  
**Pilot Participant Characteristics**

	Female (n=9)	Male (n=10)	Total (n=19)
Average Age	16.1	14.9	15.5
Race			
Caucasian	11%	10%	11%
African American	56%	70%	63%
Mixed	22%	20%	21%
Other	11%	--	5%
Average number of places lived in past month	1.3	1.5	1.4
Average number of places lived in past 6 months	2.6	2.7	2.6

#### **D. Phase Three**

Data collection was conducted during the third phase of the project. Survey administration was carried out by a team of staff from the Center for Adolescent Health and the Maryland AIDS Administration. Prior to the data collection effort, two training sessions were conducted that covered the consent process and data collection protocols.

The final OHYS contained 93 questions, some with multiple components. The instrument covered a wide variety of topics relevant to youth in out-of-home situations. Survey categories consisted of 1) demographics, 2) living situations and history, 3) relationships to parents and others, 4) suicide ideation and attempts, 5) alcohol and other drug use, 6) sexual behavior history, 7) sexual attitudes, and 8) AIDS attitudes and experiences.

During August and September of 1999 the final OHYS was administered to 336 youth between 14 and 21 years of age in group homes and shelters throughout the State of Maryland. Of the 336 surveys collected 8 (2.4%) were discarded due to highly inconsistent responses. This resulted in a total of 328 usable surveys. It is estimated that 80% of the youth in the group homes and shelters participated in the survey. Non-participants primarily consisted of youth that were either working, on home visits or had runaway. The refusal rate of the youth that were present at the group home or shelter when the data collector arrived was less than 4%. The final OHYS can be found in the appendix.

### 3. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Basic demographic characteristics can be found in Table 3.1. Of the 328 usable surveys administered, 65.5% of the respondents were male and 34.5% were female. The majority of respondents described themselves as African American, 62.5%, 20.4% as Caucasian, and 17.1% as Native American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Pacific Islander.

**Table 3.1**  
**Participant Demographics**

	n	(%)
Gender		
Male	215	(65.5)
Female	113	(34.5)
Total	328	(100)
Age, years		
14	57	(17.4)
15	72	(22.0)
16	70	(21.3)
17	62	(18.9)
>=18	67	(20.4)
Total	328	(100)
Race		
African American	205	(62.5)
Caucasian	67	(20.4)
Mixed	22	(6.7)
Native American	11	(3.4)
Other	10	(3.0)
Hispanic	8	(2.4)
Pacific Islander	3	(0.9)
Asian	2	(0.6)
Total	328	(100)

**Table 3.1 (Con't)**  
**Demographic Characteristics**

	n	(%)
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Heterosexual	285	(89.3)
Homosexual	6	(1.9)
Bisexual	10	(3.1)
Not Sure	18	(5.6)
Total	319	(100)
<b>School Status</b>		
Enrolled/Attending regularly	205	(63.9)
Enrolled/Not attending regularly	43	(13.4)
H.S. graduate	51	(15.9)
Dropped out	22	(6.9)
Total	321	(100)

When asked about sexual orientation, 89.3% indicated that they were heterosexual, with the remaining 10.6% indicating they were homosexual, bisexual or not sure.

Most respondents, 63.9%, indicated that they were enrolled and regularly attending school with 15.9% indicating that they had graduated and 20.3% indicating that they had dropped out or are not attending regularly.

Because this report provides responses by gender, bivariate analysis was run to determine whether male and female respondents were equally distributed among the different age groups. While males appear to be slightly younger than females, there was no significant age difference by gender.

**Table 3.2**  
**Gender by Age**

Years	Male n (%)	Female n (%)	Total n (%)
14	41 (19.1)	16 (14.2)	57 (17.4)
15	49 (22.8)	23 (20.4)	72 (22.0)
16	46 (21.4)	24 (21.2)	70 (21.3)
17	40 (18.6)	22 (19.5)	62 (18.9)
>=18	39 (18.1)	28 (24.8)	67 (20.4)
Total	215 (100)	113 (100)	328 (100)

## 4. LIVING SITUATION HISTORY

*80% of youth reported being in 'the system' for over a year and 61% for more than three years*

A series of questions were asked to determine the historical living situations experienced by youth currently in group homes and shelters. Questioning targeted the length of time that youth had been in their current facility, as well as within the system of social services available for youth. In addition, youth were asked about their living history in relationship to their families, the number of places they had lived in the past 12 months, how often they had run away or left home and how much time they had been on their own. Youth were also questioned about the places that they have spent at least one night in the past year from which the number of youth with episodes of homeless experiences could be determined. A final question of this section was asking the youth to list their reasons for leaving home in the past. This question provides a glimpse into the past home environments of the youth surveyed.

**Table 4.1**  
**'The System' Living Situation History (Q 7, Q8 & Q11)**

	n	(%)
Length of time in current facility		
< 1 month	56	(17.5)
1-3 mos.	52	(16.3)
4-6 mos.	57	(17.8)
7 mos. -1 year	61	(19.1)
> 1 year	94	(29.4)
Total	320	(100)
Length of time in 'the system'		
0-3 mos.	24	(7.5)
4-11 mos.	39	(12.3)
1-2 years	59	(18.6)
3-5 years	84	(26.4)
>5 years	112	(35.2)
Total	318	(100)
Where did you live/sleep before coming to this facility?		
Different residential facility	128	(40.3)
Parents/relative	95	(29.9)
Jail/juvenile detention	45	(14.2)
Other	40	(12.6)
Friend	7	(2.2)
On the street	3	(0.9)
Total	318	(100)

*61% of youth reported that they had not lived with their family in over a year, but 76% reported that they had seen or spoken with a parent in the last 3 months*

When asked about the length of time that they had been in their current facility, roughly half indicated that they had been there for less than six months with the other half indicating more than six months (Table 4.1). However, when asked about the length of time that they had been in “the system” (social services, juvenile justice foster care) the vast majority of youth indicated a year or more, 80.2%, with over 61% indicating more than three years.

When asked about their familial living situation 60.8% of the youth indicated that it had been a year or more since they had lived with a family member (Table 4.2). However, nearly 76% indicated that they had spoken with or had seen at least one of their parents within the past 3 months.

**Table 4.2**  
**Familial Living Situation (Q 9 & Q10)**

	n	(%)
How long since lived with family?		
0-3 mos.	59	(18.4)
4-11 mos.	67	(20.9)
1-2 years	74	(23.1)
3-5 years	57	(17.8)
>5 years	64	(19.9)
Total	321	(100)
How long since spoken/seen parents?		
0-3 mos.	236	(75.9)
4-11 mos.	34	(10.9)
1-2 years	11	(3.5)
3-5 years	16	(5.1)
>5 years	14	(4.5)
Total	311	(100)

Youth were presented a list of potential statements for why they may have left their home and were asked to indicate whether each reason was true for them. (Table 4.3). Over 50% of the youth indicated that they were removed by a public agency. One in three youth indicated that they left home because they were verbally abused, because people were fighting all the time and because they wanted to. Over one quarter of the youth indicated that they left home because of physical abuse, thought they could find a better place to live or that they were given up by a family member.

*Hostile home environments were reported by many youths as their reason for leaving home*

Throwaway youth are defined as youth that have been ejected from their families and homes. One in four youth from this sampled population fit this definition for throwaway youth as they indicated being kicked out or forced to leave by a family member. Nearly 13% of the youth indicated that they left home because they were sexually abused or taken advantage of. One in ten youth indicated that they left home so that they could live with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Twenty youth (6.3%) indicated that they left home because their parents couldn't handle their sexual orientation. From the demographics reported, 34 youth indicated that they were either homosexual, bisexual or unsure. While the questioning does not allow us to determine the reasons youth were removed by a public agency, their responses for why they left home provides evidence of the hostile home environments from which many of the youth have come.

**Table 4.3**  
**Reasons for Leaving Home (Q18)**

	n	(%)
I left home because...*		
I was removed by a public agency	168	(52.5)
I was verbally hurt or abused	104	(32.7)
People were arguing or fighting all the time	104	(32.5)
I wanted to	102	(32.4)
I was physically hurt or abused	91	(28.4)
I thought I could find a better place to live	90	(28.1)
I was given up by a family member	84	(26.2)
I didn't feel safe	80	(24.9)
I was forced to leave or kicked out by a family member	78	(24.5)
I didn't feel loved	78	(24.3)
My parents were using drugs	75	(23.4)
I was sexually abused or taken advantage of	41	(12.9)
I wanted to live with my boyfriend/girlfriend	36	(11.3)
My parents couldn't handle my sexual orientation	20	(6.3)

\* Respondents were instructed to check all that apply.

Questions were asked of the youth respondents regarding their history of runaway and homeless experiences. While the definitions within the literature of what constitutes a homeless, runaway or street youth varies, the results from the OHYS indicates that many of the youth surveyed have experiences in the past year that could be used to place them within one or more of these definitions. However, it is important to understand the living situations

*Over half of the youth (52%) had run away at least once in the past 12 months*

that have been experienced by youth that are in group home and shelter placements. Regardless of past experiences, all the youth surveyed could be defined as systems youth at the time of survey administration.

The OHYS asked about the length of time that they had been on their own during the past 12 months – that is, not living with a family member or not in “the system”. Of the youth surveyed, 61.8 % had never been in this situation,

**Table 4.4**  
**Runaway / Homeless Living Situation History (Q15-17)**

	n	(%)
<i>How long have you been on your own in the past 12 months?</i>		
Never	199	(61.8)
1 night	17	(5.3)
>1 night, but <1 week	18	(5.6)
>1 week, but <1 month	28	(8.7)
>1 month, but <3 months	21	(6.5)
> 3 months	39	(12.1)
Total	322	(100)
<i>How many times have you run away in the past 12 months?</i>		
Never	153	(47.8)
1 time	51	(15.9)
2 to 4 times	68	(21.3)
5 or more times	48	(15.0)
Total	320	(100)
<i>Places where youth have spent at least one night during the past 12 months*</i>		
With a relative or parent	238	(74.8)
Hanging out all night with friends	147	(46.5)
At a friend's place (without permission)	140	(44.6)
At a boyfriend/girlfriends (without permission)	136	(43.0)
Jail or juvenile detention facility	116	(37.1)
At a stranger's home	54	(17.1)
On the street	43	(13.6)
In a car	38	(12.0)
Drug treatment center	26	(8.2)

*\* Respondents were instructed to check all that apply.*

but 38.2% had been on their own for at least one night (Table 4.4) and over 12% of whom had been on their own for more than 3 months during the past year. A question of runaway experiences in the past year revealed that over

52% had run away from home (including family, group or foster home) at least once and that over 35% had done so two or more times.

*Nearly half (47%) of the youth had spent at least one night in the past year hanging out all night with friends*

Table 4.4 also shows the respondents answers to places that respondents had spent at least one night during the past 12 months. Nearly half, 46.5%, indicated that they had spent at least one night hanging out all night with their friends. And over 4 out of 10 youth indicated that they had stayed at a friend's house or at the house of a boyfriend or girlfriend with out permission. Thirty-seven percent of the youth indicated that they had been in jail or a juvenile detention facility in the past 12 months. Nearly one fifth of the youth, (17%) indicated that they had spent at least one night in the home of a stranger in the past year.

## 5. RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

### Overview

This section of the OHYS assesses the relationships that youth respondents have had with their family unit and with other individuals involved in their lives. Questions were also asked to determine the degree of social support the youth receives from family members and/or other adults.

*When asked about the woman and man that mostly raised them, 48% of youth indicated their biological mother, while only 26% indicated their biological father helped raise them.*

### A. Rearing

Almost one half (48.1%) of the youth surveyed reported that they were mostly raised by their biological mothers. After biological mothers, grandmothers were the

**Table 5.1**  
**'Woman Who Mostly Raised You' (Q19)**

	n	(%)
Biological Mother	149	(48.1)
Grandmother	50	(16.1)
Foster mother	33	(10.6)
Aunt, cousin, sister	33	(10.6)
Adoptive Mother	16	( 5.2)
Guardian or friend	10	( 3.2)
I wasn't raised by a woman	9	( 2.9)
Stepmother	6	( 1.9)
Some other woman	4	( 1.3)
Total	310	(100.0)

**Table 5.2**  
**Relationship With This Woman (Q20)**

	n	(%)
Very Close	174	(55.2)
Close	71	(22.5)
Not very Close	39	(12.4)
Not close at all	21	( 6.7)
I was not raised by a woman	10	( 3.2)
Total	315	(100.0)

*Almost 78% of the youth indicated that they were 'very close' or 'close' to the women that mostly raised them and 50% indicated that they were 'very close' or 'close' to the man that mostly raised them.*

most common female head of the household (16.1%), followed by foster mothers (10.6%) and either an aunt, cousin or sister (10.6%). The remaining 11.6% of the youth were raised by some other woman, and only 2.9% reported that they 'were not raised by a woman.' When asked how close they were to the woman who mostly raised them over 75% said 'close' or 'very close.'

While half of youth said they were raised by their biological mothers, only a quarter reported being raised by their biological fathers. Furthermore, while only 2.9% of youth said a woman did not raise them, 24.8% of youth stated that a man did not raise them. Stepfathers represented the male parental figure for 13.9% of the youth, followed by grandfathers (9.7%) and uncles, cousins or brothers (9.0%). Foster fathers and adoptive fathers represented 5.8% and 3.9% of male parental figures, respectively, and the remaining 7.4% were either a friend,

**Table 5.3**  
**'Man Who Mostly Raised You' (Q21)**

	n	(%)
Biological Father	79	(25.5)
I wasn't raised by a man	77	(24.8)
Stepfather	43	(13.9)
Grandfather	30	( 9.7)
Uncle, cousin, brother	28	( 9.0)
Foster Father	18	( 5.8)
Adoptive Father	12	( 3.9)
Guardian or friend	12	( 3.9)
Some other man	11	( 3.5)
Total	310	(100.0)

**Table 5.4**  
**Relationship With This Man (Q22)**

	n	(%)
Very Close	100	(31.4)
Close	79	(24.8)
Not very Close	36	(11.3)
Not close at all	24	( 7.5)
I was not raised by a man	79	(24.8)
Total	318	(100.0)

guardian or some other man. Just over half the youth (56.2%) said they were ‘close or ‘very close’ to the man who mostly raised them.

When asked about the relationship between the man and women who mostly raised them, about 59.1% of the youth said it was ‘close’ or ‘very close’; 21.6% indicated that it was ‘not very close’ or ‘not close at all’; and 19.4% said that this question was ‘not applicable’, which we assume to mean that there was no relevant relationship between a woman and man during their rearing.

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**Table 5.5**  
**Relationship Between The Woman And Man Who**  
**Mostly Raised You (Q23)**

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	n	(%)
Very Close	114	(36.2)
Close	72	(22.9)
Not very Close	39	(12.4)
Not close at all	29	( 9.2)
Not Applicable	61	(19.4)
Total	315	(100.0)

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## **B. Familial Relationships**

In addition to exploring the closeness of relationships with the primary male and female caregiver, the youth’s relationships with a variety of other individuals was also examined. Respondents were asked to indicate if they were ‘very close’, ‘close’, ‘not very close’, or ‘not close at all’ with various family members or adults. If the relationship did not apply to them they were instructed to check ‘does not apply to me’. Overall, almost half the youth (47.4%) said they felt ‘very close’ to their biological or adoptive mother; and almost one-third said they felt ‘very close’ to their biological or adoptive father. Relationships with stepmothers and stepfather were significantly less close with only 14.5% of youth saying they felt ‘very close’ to their stepmother and only 19.6% saying they felt ‘very close’ to their stepfathers. On the other hand the youth seemed to have significantly close relationships with their siblings: 65.2% said they were ‘very close’ to their brother(s) and 62.2% said they were ‘very

close' to their sister(s). Fifty-eight percent reported being 'very close' to their grandparents, but only slightly more than a third (34.5%) felt the same kind of bond with their foster parents.

*Youth were more likely to indicate positive relationships with siblings and grandparents than with biological or adoptive parents.*

**Table 5.6**  
**Relationships with Related and Affiliated Family Members (Q24)**

	Very Close		Close		Not very Close		Not close at all		Total	
	n	(%)	N	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Relationship With Biological/Adoptive Mother	129	(47.4)	65	(23.9)	47	(17.3)	31	(11.4)	272	(100)
Relationship With Biological/Adoptive Father	65	(31.4)	49	(23.7)	47	(22.7)	46	(22.2)	207	(100)
Relationship With Stepfather or Mom's Boyfriend	27	(19.6)	38	(27.5)	32	(23.2)	41	(29.7)	138	(100)
Relationship With Stepmother or Dad's Girlfriend	16	(14.5)	24	(21.8)	30	(27.3)	40	(36.4)	110	(100)
Relationship with Brother(s)	159	(65.2)	47	(19.3)	25	(10.2)	13	(5.3)	244	(100)
Relationship with Sister(s)	158	(62.2)	58	(22.8)	25	(9.8)	13	(5.1)	254	(100)
Relationship with Grandparent(s)	154	(58.3)	63	(23.9)	32	(12.1)	15	(5.7)	264	(100)
Relationship with your Current or Last Foster Parents	58	(34.5)	41	(24.4)	31	(18.5)	38	(22.6)	168	(100)

\* Respondents who checked 'Does not apply to me' were not included in the analysis.

Finally, when asked to describe the closeness of their family overall, 4.1% responded that they didn't have a family, and nearly one third (30.6%) indicated that their family unit was 'not very close' or 'not close at all'. However, two thirds (65.3%) described their family as 'close' or 'very close'.

**Table 5.7**  
**Relationship With Family (Q25)**

	n	(%)
Very Close	93	(29.6)
Close	112	(35.7)
Not very Close	70	(22.3)
Not close at all	26	( 8.3)
I don't have a family	13	( 4.1)
Total	314	(100)

In order to ascertain the degree to which youth in this population perceive themselves to have access to social and emotional support from parents and other adults, the youth were asked whether they had a family member or other adult to which they could turn if they had a problem. Over half the youth (50.6% and 53.3%) said that there is 'always' a family member or adult that they can go to for help, and an additional third said that they have some one to turn to 'some of the time' (37.9% and 40.8%). However, 11.5% of the youth felt that they 'never' had a family member to turn to in times of trouble and 6.0% felt they had no *adult* to turn to if they have a problem.

**Table 5.8**  
**If you have a problem, is there usually a family member that you can go to for help? (Q26)**

	n	(%)
Never	36	(11.5)
Some of the time	119	(37.9)
Always	159	(50.6)
Total	314	(100)

**Table 5.9**  
**If you have a problem, is there usually an adult that you can go to for help? (Q27)**

	n	(%)
Never	19	( 6.0)
Some of the time	130	(40.8)
Always	170	(53.3)
Total	319	(100)

In rating their agreement with statements about their parents and adults in general, 63.0% of the youth said that they typically trust their parents and 57.7% trust other adults. Regarding parental support, 59.9% reported that they receive emotional support and 56.2% felt they received lots of attention from them. Nevertheless, almost two-thirds of the youth (63.4%) expressed that would rather talk to a friend than an adult if they had a serious problem. Additionally, a large percentage of youth expressed a distrust of parents and adults, 37.1% and 42.4% respectively, and many felt that their parents did not offer emotional support, 40.1%, and did not give them lots of attention, 44.0%.

**Table 5.10**  
**Support Network (Q28)**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
I typically trust adults.	36 (11.7)	142 (46.0)	90 (29.1)	41 (13.3)	309 (100)
My parents offer me emotional support.	84 (27.8)	97 (32.1)	51 (16.9)	70 (23.2)	302 (100)
My parents give me lots of attention.	74 (24.2)	98 (32.0)	65 (21.5)	69 (22.5)	306 (100)
I trust my parents.	104 (34.1)	88 (28.9)	49 (16.1)	64 (21.0)	305 (100)
If I had a serious problem I would rather talk to a friend than an adult.	113 (36.9)	81 (26.5)	63 (20.6)	49 (16.0)	306 (100)

## 6. SUICIDE IDEATION AND ATTEMPTS

Youth were asked whether they had ever seriously considered attempting suicide in the last twelve months, as well as how many times they had *actually* attempted suicide in the last twelve months. A quarter of the youth who responded said they had seriously considered suicide in the past twelve months. Of those who considered it, 68% went on to attempt committing suicide at least once. Twenty percent of the entire group surveyed actually attempted suicide one or more times in the past twelve months, with 12.3% attempted suicide one time; 4.4% attempting suicide 2 or 3 times; and the remaining attempting suicide four or more times. Further analysis of this item indicate that gender and sexual orientation were not related to actual suicide attempts.

**TABLE 6.1**  
**Suicide Ideation and Attempts (Q 29 & 30)**

	n	(%)
<i>During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?</i>		
Yes	79	(25.3)
No	233	(74.7)
Total	312	(100)
<i>During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?</i>		
0 times	253	(80.1)
1 time	39	(12.3)
2 or 3 times	14	(4.4)
4 or 5	2	(0.6)
6 or >	8	(2.5)
Total	316	(100)

## 7. ATTITUDES TOWARDS AND EXPERIENCES WITH DRUGS

### Overview

Most of the items used in this section of the OHYS to determine the behavioral use of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use were taken verbatim from the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Additional items were included to ascertain risk and/or protective environmental influences related to drug use and some risk and/or protective attitudes regarding drugs and drug use.

*20% of youth  
smoked every day  
during the past  
month and 53%  
smoked at least  
once*

### A. Tobacco Use

Almost half of the youth surveyed (47.3%) reported no use of cigarettes in the past 30 days. The remaining 52.7% reported smoking with various degrees of irregularity (between 1 and 30 days), with 19.6% reporting that they were daily smokers.

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**TABLE 7.1**  
**Number of Days Cigarettes Smoked in Past 30 Days**  
**(Q31)**

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	n (%)	
0 days	150	(47.3)
1 or 2 days	26	(8.2)
3 to 5 days	22	(6.9)
6 to 9 days	18	(5.7)
10 to 19 days	26	(8.2)
20 to 29 days	13	(4.1)
All 30 days	62	(19.6)
Total	317	(100)

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## B. Alcohol Use

Overall, three-quarters of the sample reported to have engaging in drinking to some extent during their life; one-quarter said they had never had a drink of alcohol other than a few sips. Twenty percent of drinking youth reported to have had their first drink at the age of eight years or younger and the vast majority had drunk alcohol by the time they were 14 years old (84.2%). Among drinkers, half had consumed at least one drink in the last month and 27.7% had drunk alcohol on 3 or more days.

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**TABLE 7.2**  
**Prevalence of Alcohol Use (Q33)**

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	N	(%)
Never drank	77	(24.2)
Drank	241	(75.8)
Total	318	(100)

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**TABLE 7.3**  
**Age When Had First Drink of Alcohol Among Drinkers (Q33)**

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	n	(%)
8 years or younger	49	(20.3)
9 or 10	25	(10.4)
11 or 12	68	(28.2)
13 or 14	61	(25.3)
15 or 16	24	(10.0)
17 or older	14	(5.8)
Total	241	(100)

---

In order to identify heavy drinkers, we asked respondents to report the number of days in which they had consumed 5 or more drinks in a row. Thirty percent of drinkers had done so during the 30-day period preceding the survey. For most of these respondents, drinking 5 or more drinks was limited to 1 or 2 days (17.0%), but there were those who drank this much up to 20 days a month.

**TABLE 7.4**  
**Number of Days at Least One Drink of Alcohol Was Consumed During the Past 30 Days Among Drinkers (Q34)**

	n	(%)
0 days	119	(49.8)
1 to 2 days	54	(22.6)
3 to 5 days	32	(13.4)
6 to 9 days	19	(8.0)
10 to 19 days	10	(4.2)
20 to 29 days	3	(1.3)
All 30 days	2	(0.8)
Total	239	(100)

**TABLE 7.5**  
**Number of Days in Which 5 or More Drinks Were Consumed During the Past 30 Days Among Drinkers (Q35)**

	n	(%)
0 days	169	(70.1)
1 day	20	(8.3)
2 days	21	(8.7)
3 to 5 days	15	(6.2)
6 to 9 days	6	(2.5)
10 to 19 days	7	(2.9)
20 or more days	3	(1.2)
Total	241	(100)

### C. Marijuana Use

Over two-thirds of the youth (69.3%) had tried marijuana at some point in their lifetime. Of all youth surveyed, 13.2% indicated they had tried marijuana one or two times while 37.9% of the youth reported they had used marijuana 20 or more times. Over one in five of all youth surveyed (21.6%) indicated that they had used marijuana 100 times or more over their lifetime.

**TABLE 7.6**  
**Number of Times Marijuana Used Over Lifetime (Q36)**

	n	(%)
0 times	98	(30.7)
1 or 2 times	42	(13.2)
3 to 9 times	34	(10.7)
10 to 19 times	24	( 7.5)
20 to 39 times	19	( 6.0)
40 to 99 times	33	(10.3)
100 or more times	69	(21.6)
Total	319	(100)

Among those who had used marijuana, 11.9% started at 8 years or younger, but the majority (59.0%) started between the ages of 11 and 14.

**TABLE 7.7**  
**Age When First Tried Marijuana Among Marijuana Users (Q37)**

	n	(%)
8 years or younger	27	(11.9)
9 or 10	27	(11.9)
11 or 12	60	(26.4)
13 or 14	74	(32.6)
15 or 16	25	(11.0)
17 or older	14	( 6.2)
Total	227	(100)

Among youth that had smoked marijuana at some point in their past, 43.2% had smoked at least once during the previous 30-day period. Seventeen percent of youth indicated that they had used marijuana 10 or more times in the past month.

**TABLE 7.8**  
**Frequency of Marijuana Use in Past 30 Days Among**  
**Marijuana Users (Q38)**

	n	(%)
0 times	129	(56.8)
1 or 2 times	32	(14.1)
3 to 9 times	27	(11.9)
10 to 19 times	15	( 6.6)
20 to 39 times	5	( 2.2)
>= 40 times	19	( 8.4)
Total	227	(100)

#### D. Use of Other Drugs

The use of drugs other than tobacco, alcohol and marijuana was relatively uncommon. The vast majority of youth reported that they had never sniffed glue (91.8%) or tried cocaine (91.8%), methamphetamines (94.4%), heroin (95.9%), or steroid pills (96.9%). However, 14.5% said they used other illegal drugs. About 3% of the youth said they had injected illegal drugs; 1.3% said it was one time and the other 1.9% said it was two or more times. Two and a half percent reported having shared a needle with another person in their lifetime.

**TABLE 7.9**  
**Frequency of Other Drug Use Over Lifetime (Q 40-47)**

	0 Times n (%)	1-2 times n (%)	3-9 times n (%)	10-19 times n (%)	20-39 times n (%)	>= 40 times n (%)	Total n (%)
Cocaine	291 (91.8)	11 (3.5)	8 (2.5)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	5 (1.6)	317 (100)
Sniffed Glue	291 (91.8)	17 (5.4)	3 (0.9)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.6)	317 (100)
Meth.	301 (94.4)	11 (3.4)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.6)	319 (100)
Heroin	305 (95.9)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	7 (2.2)	318 (100)
Steroid pills	309 (96.9)	3 (0.9)	3 (0.9)	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	319 (100)
Other drugs	271 (85.5)	21 (6.6)	10 (3.2)	4 (1.3)	2 (0.6)	9 (2.8)	317 (100)

**TABLE 7.10**  
**Injecting Drug Use and Needle Sharing Over Lifetime**  
**(Q38 & 39)**

	n	(%)
<i>Injected illegal drugs</i>		
0 times	309	(96.9)
1 time	4	( 1.3)
2 times	6	( 1.9)
Total	319	(100)
<i>Shared a Needle</i>		
0 times	311	(97.5)
1 time	6	( 1.9)
2 times	2	( .6)
Total	319	(100)

*27% of youth had been  
forced to have sex  
while they were drunk  
or high*

Youth were also asked questions of their experiences involving alcohol and drug use. Most, 76.0%, indicated that they did not use drugs to fit in with their friends. A large percentage of youth indicated that they regretted something that happened to them while drunk or high, 35.3%; had blacked out while drunk or high, 25.1%; had been in a physical fight while drunk or high 35.0%. When asked about forced sexual encounters while they or their partner were drunk or high, 13.7% indicated that they had forced someone who was drunk or high to have sex, and 26.6% had been forced themselves to have sex while they were drunk or high.

**TABLE 7.11**  
**Experiences Involving Alcohol and Drug Use (Q50)**

	No, Never Happened	Yes, Happened Once	Yes, Happened more than once	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Have you ever...				
Used drugs to fit in with your friends	238 (76.0)	45 (14.4)	30 ( 9.6)	313 (100)
Regretted something that happened while drunk or high	202 (64.7)	68 (21.8)	42 (13.5)	312 (100)
Blacked out while drunk or high	236 (74.9)	50 (15.9)	29 ( 9.2)	315 (100)
Been in a physical fight while drunk or high	204 (65.0)	49 (15.6)	61 (19.4)	314 (100)
Talked or forced someone into having sex while they were drunk or high	271 (86.3)	20 ( 6.4)	23 ( 7.3)	314 (100)
Has anyone ever...				
Forced you into having sex while you were drunk or high	229 (73.4)	52 (16.7)	31 ( 9.9)	312 (100)

Several items attempted to go beyond behavioral inquiry since there was an interest in understanding some of the environments experienced by this population in relation to drug use. Nearly twenty-eight percent indicated that drugs were part of their home environment and 58.8% indicated that some of their family members used drugs. The majority of youth, 61.0%, indicated that the people they hang out with most sometimes use drugs and that they could get drugs in their neighborhood if they wanted to, 64.7%. Less than half (45.1%) indicated that they avoid places where there are drugs. When asked about whether their parents had told them not to do drugs, 76.5% indicated that they had done so.

**TABLE 7.12**  
**Prevalence of Drugs in Environment (Q51)**

	True n (%)	Not True n (%)	Total n (%)
Drugs are a part of my home environment.	86 (27.5)	227 (72.5)	313 (100)
Some of my family members use drugs.	183 (58.8)	128 (41.2)	311 (100)
The people I hang out with most sometimes use drugs.	191 (61.0)	122 (39.0)	313 (100)
If I wanted to, I could get drugs in my neighborhood.	202 (64.7)	110 (35.3)	312 (100)
I avoid areas or places where there are drugs.	139 (45.1)	169 (54.9)	308 (100)
My parents have told me not to use drugs.	238 (76.5)	73 (23.5)	311 (100)

A few items assess the degree to which the youth surveyed felt about marijuana, using alcohol or drugs during sex and whether they felt their parents would be concerned about them if they were using drugs. Of the youth surveyed 40.5% indicated that they felt marijuana was a safe drug. An equally large percentage, 41.7%, indicated that drugs or alcohol made it easier to have sex with someone. When asked about parental concern regarding drug use, 28.9% indicated that their parents would not be concerned with 71% indicating that their parents would be concerned.

**TABLE 7.13**  
**Attitudes Toward Drugs (Q52)**

	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree N (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Total n (%)
In my opinion, marijuana is a safe drug.	53 (17.2)	72 (23.3)	77 (24.9)	107 (34.6)	309 (100)
It is easier to have sex with someone who is drunk or high.	57 (18.3)	73 (23.4)	60 (19.2)	122 (39.1)	312 (100)
My parents would be concerned if I were using drugs.	160 (51.4)	61 (19.6)	39 (12.5)	51 (16.4)	311 (100)

## 8. SEXUAL BEHAVIOR, EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES

### Overview

This chapter examines a number of issues related to the sexual behavior and attitudes of youth in this survey. First and foremost, it addresses the extent of sexual activity: What percentage of these youth are sexually active? At what age did they first become sexually active? How many partners have they had in their lifetime? How many have they had recently? It establishes the extent to which youth have engaged in vaginal, anal, and oral sex, as well as their reasons for having sex. Furthermore, OHYS items are used to explore the connection between intercourse and alcohol or drug use, as well as condom use, birth control, prior pregnancies and a history of forced sex. Attitudes about sexuality and condom use are explored, as well as health seeking behavior and STD history.

### Analytic Strategy

Analysis of the items in this chapter is based primarily on respondents who have been classified as either sexually active (defined as having engaged in vaginal, anal, or oral sex), or those who have participated in insertive sex (defined as having engaged in either vaginal or anal sex.). The following section explains the criteria used to classify respondents into vaginal, anal, and oral sex categories.

Respondents who answered affirmatively to item number 53 (“Have you ever had vaginal sexual intercourse?”), and who indicated in response to item number 54 that they had had sexual intercourse with at least one person in their lifetime (“During your life, with how many people have you had vaginal sexual intercourse?”), were classified as having had vaginal intercourse. Conversely, respondents who said they had *never* had vaginal sexual intercourse in response to both items #53 and #54, were classified as *never* having had vaginal sexual intercourse. As shown in Table 8.1, the total number of respondents included in the classification for vaginal

intercourse was 316. Twelve respondents were not included in these tables since they either had missing responses to one or more of these items, or provided inconsistent responses.

The same criteria was used to classify individuals into the anal and oral sex categories. Respondents who answered affirmatively to item #55 (“Have you ever had anal intercourse?”) and who indicated in response to item #56 that they had anal sex with at least one person in their lifetime were classified as having had anal sex. Those who said they had *never* had anal sex in response to both of these items were classified as not having had anal sex. Likewise, respondents who answered affirmatively to item #60 (“Have you ever had oral sex?”) and who also indicated in item #61 that they had oral sex with at least one person in their lifetime were classified as having had oral sex. Those who said they had *never* had oral sex in response to both of these items were classified as not having had oral sex. As shown in Table 8.1, the total number of respondents included in the anal and oral sex categories was 301 and 304, respectively. The remaining respondents either provided inconsistent responses or had missing answers to these items.

87% of the youth surveyed indicated that they have engaged in some form of sexual activity

After these initial classifications were made, respondents were either classified as having had insertive sex (vaginal or anal sex) or as being sexually active (vaginal, anal or oral). As shown in Table 8.1, this method resulted in 312 of the 328 respondents being assigned to the sexually active category (sexually active=270; non-sexually active=42) and 309 to the insertive sex category (insertive sex=262; no insertive sex=47). The reference group used in the analysis of each item depends on the wording of the question, i.e. in response to the question “How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time” only respondents who had engaged in vaginal or anal sex were asked to respond.

## **A. Prevalence of Sexual Activity**

Unlike the YRBS, the OHYS attempted to isolate the types of sexual activity being practiced by this population of youth. While the YRBS asks youth to answer the question "Have you ever had sex?" and "How old were you when you had sex the first time?" the MARS project's focus groups and in-depth interviews revealed that there is some variation

in how youth define sex. Due to the variation in levels of risk of different types of sex acts, the OHYS asked youth to specify their level of sexual activity based on vaginal, anal and oral sex behavior. Overall, sexual activity is defined here as those having engaged in vaginal, anal, *or* oral sex of which 86.5% of the sample reported being sexually active. Of those who were classified as sexually active, 97% had engaged in *insertive* (either vaginal or anal) sex. Of the total sample, 84.8% reported having engaged in insertive sex. Each type of sex was also examined independently: 80.7% of the sample had engaged in vaginal intercourse; 61.5% reported having had oral sex; and, 23.9% said they had had anal sex.

**Table 8.1**  
**Prevalence of Sexual Activity Among Youth**

		Male (n=215)		Female (n=113)		Total (n=328)	
		n	(%)	N	(%)	n	(%)
<i>Sexually Active (vaginal, anal, oral)</i>							
Yes		180	(88.2)	90	(83.3)	270	(86.5)
No		24	(11.7)	18	(16.7)	42	(13.5)
Total		204	(100)	108	(100)	312	(100)
<i>Insertive Sex (vaginal or anal)</i>							
Yes		174	(86.1)	88	(82.2)	262	(84.8)
No		28	(13.9)	19	(17.8)	47	(15.2)
Total		202	(100)	107	(100)	309	(100)
<i>Vaginal</i>							
Yes		168	(81.6)	87	(79.1)	255	(80.7)
No		38	(18.5)	23	(20.9)	61	(19.3)
Total		206	(100)	110	(100)	316	(100)
<i>Oral</i>							
Yes		130	(64.7)	57	(55.3)	187	(61.5)
No		71	(35.3)	46	(44.7)	117	(38.5)
Total		201	(100)	103	(100)	304	(100)
<i>Anal</i>							
Yes		51	(26.2)	21	(19.8)	72	(23.9)
No		144	(73.9)	85	(80.2)	229	(76.1)
Total		195	(100)	106	(100)	301	(100)

## B. Age When Respondents Had Sex For the First Time

Over one-third of those who reported having had insertive sex had done so before they were 12 years old, 57% before they were 13

Among respondents who reported having either vaginal *or* anal sex in their lifetime (n=262), over a third (34.8%) reported having had sex for the first time when they were 11 years old or younger. Twenty-three percent were 12 years old when they first had sex, 15.8% were 13; 12.3% were 14; 8.3% were 15; 2.8% were 16; and 3.4% were 17 years old or older. Almost three-quarters of the youth (73.1%) reported that they had insertive sex for the first time before they were 14 years old. The median age for first vaginal or anal sex, among those having had sex, was 12 for males and 13 for females.

**Table 8.2**  
**Age When Youth Had Vaginal or Anal Sex For the First Time (Q57)**

Years	Male (n=174)		Female (n=88)		Total (n=262)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<=11	77	(45.6)	11	(13.1)	88	(34.8)
12	36	(21.3)	21	(25.0)	57	(22.5)
13	24	(14.2)	16	(19.1)	40	(15.8)
14	17	(10.1)	14	(16.7)	31	(12.3)
15	9	( 5.3)	12	(14.3)	21	( 8.3)
16	2	( 1.2)	5	( 6.0)	7	( 2.8)
>=17	4	( 2.4)	5	( 6.0)	9	( 3.4)
Total	169	(100)	84	(100)	253	(100)

## C. Number of Partners

One-half of those who have had vaginal intercourse have had six or more partners in their lifetime

Among respondents who reported having had vaginal sexual intercourse, 14.5% reported only having had sex with one sexual partner but nearly half (49.5%) had had *six or more* partners. The number of partners among youth having had anal sex was much lower. Of the 72 youth that reported having had anal sex (23.9% of sampled youth), 41.7% indicated that they had had anal sex with only one partner in their lifetime; 19.4% had had two partners and the remaining 38.9% reported having had three or more anal sex partners. Among the 187 youth that reported having had oral sex, 46.5% had had one or two partners with the remaining 53.5% reporting having had 3 or more oral sex partners.

**Table 8.3**  
**Number of Lifetime Partners Among Youth Having Had Vaginal Intercourse (Q54)**

	Male (n=168)	Female (n=87)	Total (n=255)
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
1 partner	24 (14.3)	13 (14.9)	37 (14.5)
2 partners	15 ( 8.9)	15 (17.2)	30 (11.8)
3 partners	16 ( 9.5)	7 ( 8.1)	23 ( 9.0)
4 partners	5 ( 3.0)	10 (11.5)	15 ( 5.9)
5 partners	12 ( 7.1)	12 (13.8)	24 ( 9.4)
6-10 partners	40 (23.8)	15 (17.2)	55 (21.6)
11-20 partners	27 (16.1)	4 ( 4.6)	31 (12.2)
> 20 partners	29 (17.3)	11 (12.6)	40 (15.7)
Total	168 (100)	87 (100)	255 (100)

**Table 8.4**  
**Number of Lifetime Partners Among Youth Having Had Anal Sex (Q56)**

	Male (n=51)	Female (n=21)	Total (n=72)
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
1 partner	20 (39.2)	10 (47.6)	30 (41.7)
2 partners	6 (11.8)	8 (38.1)	14 (19.4)
3 partners	7 (13.7)	2 ( 9.5)	9 (12.5)
4 partners	2 ( 3.9)	1 ( 4.8)	3 ( 4.2)
5 partners	7 (13.7)	0 ( 0.0)	7 ( 9.7)
6-10 partners	2 ( 3.9)	0 ( 0.0)	2 ( 2.8)
11-20 partners	1 ( 2.0)	0 ( 0.0)	1 ( 1.4)
> 20 partners	6 (11.8)	0 ( 0.0)	6 ( 8.3)
Total	51 (100)	21 (100)	72 (100)

**Table 8.5**  
**Number of Lifetime Partners Among Youth Having Had Oral Sex (Q61)**

	Male (n=130)	Female (n=57)	Total (n=187)
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
1 partner	25 (19.2)	19 (33.3)	44 (23.5)
2 partners	29 (22.3)	14 (24.6)	43 (23.0)
3 partners	14 (10.8)	7 (12.3)	21 (11.2)
4 partners	13 (10.0)	4 ( 7.0)	17 ( 9.1)
5 partners	16 (10.0)	4 ( 7.0)	20 (10.7)
6-10 partners	16 (12.3)	5 ( 8.9)	21 (11.2)
11-20 partners	6 ( 4.6)	1 ( 1.8)	7 ( 3.7)
> 20 partners	14 (10.8)	3 ( 5.3)	17 ( 9.1)
Total	130 (100)	57 (100)	187 (100)

#### D. Frequency of Sex in the Last Month and Number of Partners in Last Three Months

58% of youth whom have had insertive sex reported having had sex at least once in the past four weeks

Respondents who reported ever having had vaginal or anal sex, were asked how many times they had had sex in the last four weeks. In response, 42.0% said they had not had sex in the last four weeks; 42.9% had had sex between 1 and 4 times; and 15.2% had had sex 5 or more times in the last four weeks. Respondents were also asked how many partners they had had in the last three months. In response to this question, almost a quarter (23.9%) had not had any partners in the past three months; a third of the youth (33.6%) had had one partner; 15.8% two partners and the remaining 42.5% had 3 or more partners in the past three months.

**Table 8.6**  
**Frequency of Sexual Intercourse in the Past Four Weeks Among Youth Having Had Vaginal or Anal Intercourse (Q58)**

	Male (n=174)		Female (n=88)		Total (n=262)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
0 times	67	(41.9)	35	(42.2)	102	(42.0)
1 time	25	(15.6)	16	(19.3)	41	(16.9)
2 times	23	(14.4)	6	(7.2)	29	(12.0)
3 times	13	(8.1)	8	(9.7)	21	(8.6)
4 times	8	(5.0)	5	(6.0)	13	(5.4)
5 or more times	24	(15.0)	13	(15.7)	37	(15.2)
Total	160	(100)	83	(100)	243	(100)

**Table 8.7**  
**Number of Sexual Partners In the Past Three Months Among Youth Having Had Vaginal or Anal Intercourse (Q59)**

	Male (n=174)		Female (n=88)		Total (n=262)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
0 partners	40	(24.7)	19	(22.4)	59	(23.9)
1 partners	40	(24.7)	43	(50.6)	83	(33.6)
2 partners	24	(14.8)	15	(17.7)	39	(15.8)
3 partners	22	(13.6)	2	(2.4)	24	(9.7)
4 partners	12	(7.4)	2	(2.4)	14	(5.7)
5 partners	11	(6.8)	3	(3.5)	14	(5.7)
6-10 partners	6	(3.7)	0	(0.0)	6	(2.4)
11-20 partners	5	(3.1)	1	(1.2)	6	(2.4)
> 20 partners	2	(1.2)	0	(0.0)	2	(0.8)
Total	162	(100)	85	(100)	247	(100)

**Table 8.8**  
**Percentage of Sexually Active Youth Having Sex With Two or More Partners In The Same Day (Q64)**

	Male (n=180) n (%)	Female (n=90) n (%)	Total (n=270) n (%)
No, never	78 (47.0)	62 (72.1)	140 (55.6)
Yes, once	45 (27.1)	13 (15.1)	58 (23.0)
Yes, more than once	43 (25.9)	11 (12.8)	54 (21.4)
Total	166 (100)	86 (100)	252 (100)

### E. Reasons for Having Sex

Respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for having sex. As expected, many said for pleasure (91.9%); or because they were in love (71.3%). However, a third of the youth (34.3%) said they had had sex because they were

**Table 8.9**  
**Reasons For Having Sex Among Sexually Active Respondents (Q65)**

	Male n (%) <sup>a</sup>	Female n (%) <sup>a</sup>	Total n (%) <sup>a</sup>
For pleasure; feels good	151 (92.1)	76 (91.6)	227 (91.9)
Because my boyfriend/ Girlfriend wants to	118 (72.8)	58 (70.7)	176 (72.1)
Because I was in love	112 (68.3)	64 (77.1)	176 (71.3)
For fun, something to do	104 (64.2)	30 (36.1)	134 (54.7)
To feel cared about	59 (36.2)	37 (45.1)	96 (39.2)
Because I was drunk or high	60 (36.6)	24 (29.6)	84 (34.3)
To keep my boyfriend/ Girlfriend interested in me	40 (24.4)	25 (30.5)	65 (26.4)
I was forced to have sex	24 (14.9)	31 (37.8)	55 (22.6)
For clothes, gifts	32 (19.5)	10 (12.1)	42 (17.0)
To get pregnant	16 ( 9.9)	19 (23.2)	35 (14.4)
For money	25 (15.4)	10 (12.1)	35 (14.3)
For a place to stay	12 ( 7.4)	10 (12.1)	22 ( 8.9)
For drugs	11 ( 6.7)	5 ( 6.0)	16 ( 6.5)
For food	8 ( 4.9)	5 ( 6.0)	13 ( 5.3)

Note: Multiple reasons were recorded from respondents.

<sup>a</sup> Percentages are of those sexually active youth that responded to each item.

drunk or high, and 22.6% of the youth said they had had sex because they were ‘forced to.’ A significant proportion also reported having had sex in exchange for material goods, such as clothes or gifts (17.0%), money (14.3%), a place to stay (8.9%), drugs (6.5%), or food (5.3%).

The most commonly reported reason for have sex was “For pleasure; feels good”

## F. The Influence of Drugs and Alcohol on Sexual Activity

Among respondents who reported having sex in the last 12 months, 44.2% said they ‘never’ used drugs or drank alcohol before having sex, 35.5% said they used drugs or alcohol ‘less than half the time’, and 10.7% reported using drugs or alcohol ‘half the time’. Nearly one in then sexually active youth (9.7%) reported using alcohol or drugs more than half the time or always before having sexual intercourse. However, when asked whether they had used alcohol or drugs before they had sexual intercourse *the last time*, more than one in four youth (27.4%) sexually active youth replied ‘Yes’.

**Table 8.10**  
**During the past 12 months, how often did you drink alcohol or use drugs before you had sexual intercourse (vaginal or anal)? (Q66)**

	Male (n=133)		Female (n=64)		Total (n=197)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Never	58	(45.3)	29	(43.6)	87	(44.2)
Less than 1/2 the time	45	(39.1)	25	(33.8)	70	(35.5)
About half the time	17	( 6.3)	4	(12.8)	21	(10.7)
More than 1/2 the time	9	( 6.3)	4	( 6.8)	13	( 6.6)
Always (every time)	4	( 3.1)	2	( 3.0)	6	( 3.1)
Total	133	(100)	64	(100)	197	(100)

Note: This analysis only included respondents who said they had sex in the last year.

**Table 8.11**  
**Did you drink alcohol or use drugs before you had sexual intercourse the last time? (Q67)**

	Male (n=174)		Female (n=88)		Total (n=262)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Yes	47	(29.2)	20	(23.8)	67	(27.4)
No	114	(70.8)	64	(76.2)	178	(72.7)
Total	161	(100)	84	(100)	245	(100)

## G. Condom Use

One-third of sexually active youth reported using condoms consistently (everytime)

Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they used condoms in the last year. Slightly over a third (35.9%) of the sexually active youth reported using condoms consistently (every time); and 20.3% said they used condoms ‘more than half the time.’ Subsequently, forty-four percent of the youth reported using condoms about ‘half the time’ or less, 17.9% of whom reported ‘never’ using condoms. A little over half of the youth (53.9%) said they had used a condom *the last time* they had sex.

**Table 8.12**  
**During the past 12 months, how often did you use a condom when you had sexual intercourse? (Q68)**

	Males (n=139)		Females (n=73)		Total (n=212)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Never	20	(14.4)	18	(24.7)	38	(17.9)
Less than 1/2 the time	23	(16.6)	15	(20.6)	38	(17.9)
About half the time	11	(7.9)	6	(8.2)	17	(8.0)
More than 1/2 the time	26	(18.7)	17	(23.3)	43	(20.3)
Always (every time)	59	(42.5)	17	(23.3)	76	(35.9)
Total	139	(100)	73	(100)	212	(100)

Note: This analysis only included respondents who said they had sex in the last year.

**Table 8.13**  
**The last time you had sexual intercourse did you or your partner use a condom? (Q69)**

	Males (n=174)		Females (n=88)		Total (n=262)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
No	64	(37.9)	53	(62.3)	117	(46.1)
Yes	105	(62.1)	32	(37.7)	137	(53.9)
Total	169	(100)	85	(100)	254	(100)

In order to ascertain barriers to condom use among the youth surveyed, respondents were asked to indicate all the reasons for which they may not have used condoms in the past. Youth who had never had sexual intercourse or used condoms *all the time* were permitted to skip ahead to the next question. Seventy-four respondents (or 32.2%) of those having had insertive sex (n=262) indicated that they ‘always use condoms’ and skipped ahead to the next question. This response is consistent with question #68

which indicates that 35.9% of respondents who have had vaginal or anal sex in the last year ‘always’ used condoms.

Among those who responded to this question (N=156), the most common reason for not using condoms was that they did not like the way they felt (41.7%). About

**Table 8.14**  
**Reasons For Not Using Condoms (Q70a-70h)**

	Males (n=92 ) n (%)	Females(n=64 ) n (%)	Total (n=156) n (%)
I don't like the way condoms feel.	41 (44.6)	24 (37.5)	65 (41.7)
I didn't have one at the time.	43 (46.7)	20 (31.3)	63 (40.4)
I trust my partner.	31 (33.7)	31 (48.4)	62 (39.7)
Too caught up in the moment.	31 (33.7)	30 (46.9)	61 (39.1)
My partner doesn't like them.	23 (25.0)	15 (23.4)	38 (24.4)
I wanted to have baby	17 (18.5)	14 (21.9)	31 (19.9)
I was afraid of what my partner might think if I suggested using condoms.	5 ( 5.4)	8 (12.5)	13 ( 8.3)
I don't care about protecting myself.	5 ( 5.4)	3 ( 4.7)	8 ( 5.1)

Note: Multiple responses were recorded from respondents.

forty percent of the respondents said they didn't use condoms because they 'didn't have one at the time', because they 'trusted their partner', and because they were 'too caught up in the moment.' About a quarter of the youth said they didn't use condoms because their partner doesn't like them, and 19.9% said it was because they wanted to have a baby. Relatively few said they were afraid of what their partner might think if they suggested using condoms (8.3%), and only a handful said they didn't care about protecting themselves (5.1%).

Of those who have had anal intercourse 70% have done so at least once without using a condom

Respondents were also asked about their use of condoms during oral and anal sex. In relation to oral sex, 27.4% of respondents said they used protection the last time they had oral sex. When asked whether they had ever had anal intercourse without using a condom, 29.7% said ‘no’, they always use a condom, but 70% said they had had unprotected anal intercourse at least once with 45.3% indicating more than one experience with unprotected anal intercourse.

**Table 8.15**

**The last time you had oral sex did you or your partner use protection? (Q74)**

	Males (n=130)		Females (n=57)		Total (n=187)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
No	81	(67.5)	46	(83.6)	127	(72.6)
Yes	39	(32.5)	9	(16.4)	48	(27.4)
Total	120	(100)	55	(100)	175	(100)

**Table 8.16**

**Have you ever had anal intercourse without using a condom? (Q75)**

	Males (n=51)		Females(n=21)		Total (n=72)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
No, I always use a condom when I have anal intercourse	13	(28.3)	6	(33.3)	19	(29.7)
Yes, once	13	(28.3)	3	(16.7)	16	(25.0)
Yes, more than once	20	(43.5)	9	(50.0)	29	(45.3)
Total	46	(100)	18	(100)	64	(100)

## H. Birth Control

Respondents who had engaged in vaginal sexual intercourse were asked what method of birth control they had used the *last time* they had sexual intercourse. In response, almost a half (48.9%) said condoms. The next most frequently provided response was ‘no method’ (17.9%), followed by birth control pills (12.2%), withdrawal (7.4%), and Depo-Provera (5.2%).

**Table 8.17**  
**Method used to prevent pregnancy during last intercourse (Q71)**

	Males (n=168)		Females (n=87)		Total (n=255)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Condoms	85	(56.7)	27	(34.2)	112	(48.9)
None	19	(12.7)	22	(27.9)	41	(17.9)
Birth Control Pills	20	(13.3)	8	(10.1)	28	(12.2)
Withdrawal	8	( 5.3)	9	(11.4)	17	( 7.4)
Not Applicable	8	( 5.3)	4	( 5.1)	12	( 5.2)
Depo-Provera	3	( 2.0)	8	(10.1)	11	( 4.8)
Not sure	7	( 4.7)	1	( 1.3)	8	( 3.5)
Total	150	(100)	79	(100)	229	(100)

### I. Pregnancies and Pregnancy Scares

36% of the sexually active females reported having been pregnant at least once

We were interested in the number of times respondents had either been pregnant themselves or had gotten someone else pregnant. The results indicate that 31.4% of respondents who have had vaginal sexual intercourse have been pregnant at least once, or have gotten someone else pregnant at least once (35.7% for females and 29.1% for males). Nearly 10% of these respondents had experienced more than one pregnancy.

**Table 8.18**  
**How many times have you been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant? (Q72)**

	Males (n=168)		Females (n=87)		Total (n=255)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
0 times	108	(66.7)	54	(64.3)	162	(65.9)
1 time	32	(19.8)	21	(25.0)	53	(21.5)
2 or more times	15	( 9.3)	9	(10.7)	24	( 9.8)
Not sure	7	( 4.3)	0	( 0.0)	7	( 2.9)
Total	162	(100)	84	(100)	246	(100)

Respondents were also asked about pregnancy scares: how many times they thought that they or their partner were pregnant, but found out that they were not. More than half (52.3%) of the sexually active youth said this had happened at least once and 25.5% indicated that it had happened two or more times.

**Table 8.19**

**How many times have you thought you or your partner were pregnant and found out that you or your partner were not? (Q73)**

	Males (n=168)		Females (n=87)		Total (n=255)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
0 times	79	(50.3)	35	(42.7)	114	(47.7)
1 time	39	(24.8)	25	(30.5)	64	(26.8)
2 times	13	( 8.3)	10	(12.2)	23	( 9.6)
3 times	12	( 7.6)	6	( 7.3)	18	( 7.5)
I don't know	5	( 3.2)	3	( 3.7)	8	( 3.4)
Does not apply to me	9	( 5.7)	3	( 3.7)	12	( 5.0)
Total	157	(100)	82	(100)	239	(100)

## J. Attitudes About Sex and Condoms

82% of the sexually active youth expressed approval for premarital sex and 63% expressed approval for recreational sex (sex without love)

Respondents were asked to indicate on a 4-point likert scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements pertaining to their attitudes about sex and condom use. The majority of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that talking about condoms with sexual partners is difficult (78.1%) and that it is a hassle to protect themselves during sex (76.9%). Nevertheless, when asked what they would do if they wanted to have sex, but they didn't have a condom, 50.0% said they would probably still have sex. When asked about attitudes regarding premarital and recreational sex, 81.6% of the respondents said that it is okay to have sex before marriage; but fewer (62.6%) said that sex is okay even if a couple is not in love. When asked about the importance of sexual relationships in their own lives, only slightly more than half (53.3%) of the youth said that sexual relationships are an important part of their own lives.

**Table 8.20**  
**Attitudes regarding sex and contraceptive use (Q76a-76f)**

	Males (n=180)		Females (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	N	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<i>Talking about condoms with sexual partners is difficult.</i>						
Strongly agree	13	(7.9)	6	(7.2)	19	(7.7)
Agree	24	(14.6)	11	(13.3)	35	(14.2)
Disagree	68	(41.5)	26	(31.3)	94	(38.1)
Strongly disagree	59	(36.0)	40	(48.2)	99	(40.1)
Total	164	(100)	83	(100)	247	(100)
<i>It is a hassle to protect myself during sex.</i>						
Strongly agree	22	(13.5)	7	( 8.4)	29	(11.8)
Agree	23	(14.1)	5	( 6.0)	28	(11.4)
Disagree	58	(35.6)	30	(36.1)	88	(35.8)
Strongly disagree	60	(36.8)	41	(49.4)	101	(41.1)
Total	163	(100)	83	(100)	246	(100)
<i>If someone wanted to have sex but we didn't have a condom, we would probably still have sex.</i>						
Strongly agree	35	(21.5)	8	( 9.9)	43	(17.6)
Agree	52	(31.9)	27	(33.3)	79	(32.4)
Disagree	43	(26.4)	20	(24.7)	63	(25.8)
Strongly disagree	33	(20.3)	26	(32.1)	59	(24.2)
Total	163	(100)	81	(100)	244	(100)
<i>I think it is okay to have sex before getting married.</i>						
Strongly agree	77	(47.3)	21	(25.6)	98	(40.0)
Agree	59	(36.2)	43	(52.4)	102	(41.6)
Disagree	15	( 9.2)	9	(11.0)	24	( 9.8)
Strongly disagree	12	( 7.4)	9	(11.0)	21	( 8.6)
Total	163	(100)	82	(100)	245	(100)
<i>Sexual relationships are an important part of my life.</i>						
Strongly agree	46	(28.2)	12	(14.8)	58	(23.8)
Agree	52	(31.9)	20	(24.7)	72	(29.5)
Disagree	49	(30.1)	30	(37.0)	79	(32.4)
Strongly disagree	16	( 9.8)	19	(23.5)	35	(14.3)
Total	163	(100)	81	(100)	244	(100)
<i>I think sex is okay even if a couple is not in love.</i>						
Strongly agree	54	(32.9)	6	(7.3)	60	(24.4)
Agree	62	(37.8)	32	(39.0)	94	(38.2)
Disagree	31	(18.9)	21	(25.6)	52	(21.1)
Strongly disagree	17	(10.4)	23	(28.1)	40	(16.3)
Total	164	(100)	82	(100)	246	(100)

## K. Forced Sex

A very large portion of the youth surveyed reported having experienced forced sex

A significant portion of the sexually active youth reported that they had been forced to have sex on one or more occasions. Twenty-one percent had been forced to have sex with an adult they know; 18.3% had been forced to have sex with a friend; 17.5% had been forced to have sex with a boyfriend or girlfriend; 15.4% had been forced to have sex with a family member; and, 14.3% had been forced to have sex with a stranger.

**Table 8.21**  
**Experiences with forced sex ( Q77a-77e)**

	Males (n=180)		Females (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<i>Have you ever been forced to have sex with a boyfriend or girlfriend?</i>						
No, this never happened	141	(86.0)	63	(75.9)	204	(82.6)
Yes, this has happened once	18	(11.0)	15	(18.1)	33	(13.4)
Yes, more than once	5	( 3.0)	5	( 6.0)	10	( 4.1)
Total	164	(100)	83	(100)	247	(100)
<i>Have you ever been forced to have sex with a friend?</i>						
No, this never happened	138	(84.2)	64	(77.1)	202	(81.8)
Yes, this has happened once	19	(11.6)	15	(18.1)	34	(13.8)
Yes, more than once	7	( 4.3)	4	( 4.8)	11	( 4.5)
Total	164	(100)	83	(100)	247	(100)
<i>Have you ever had sex with a family member against your will?</i>						
No, this never happened	146	(88.5)	64	(77.1)	210	(84.7)
Yes, this has happened once	10	( 6.1)	9	(10.8)	19	( 7.7)
Yes, more than once	9	( 5.5)	10	(12.1)	19	( 7.7)
Total	165	(100)	83	(100)	248	(100)
<i>Have you ever had sex with an adult you know against your will?</i>						
No, this never happened	136	(82.9)	59	(71.1)	195	(79.0)
Yes, this has happened once	16	( 9.8)	14	(16.9)	30	(12.2)
Yes, more than once	12	( 7.3)	10	(12.1)	22	( 8.9)
Total	164	(100)	83	(100)	247	(100)
<i>Have you ever had sex with a stranger against your will?</i>						
No, this never happened	147	(90.2)	64	(77.1)	211	(85.8)
Yes, this has happened once	11	( 6.8)	13	(15.7)	24	( 9.8)
Yes, more than once	5	( 3.1)	6	( 7.2)	11	( 4.5)
Total	164	(100)	83	(100)	247	(100)

## L. Sex with High Risk Partners

Sexually active youth were asked to provide an estimate of the likelihood that they had engaged in various risky behaviors. The first question asked how likely it was that they had had sex with someone who had used a needle to inject illegal drugs into his or her body. Roughly 14% of the sexually active said this was at least ‘somewhat likely’ to have happened. When asked about the likelihood of having had sex with someone with an STD, nearly 30% said that this was at least “somewhat likely.” Finally, when asked whether they might have had sex with someone who has HIV, 14% said this was at least “somewhat likely.”

**Table 8.22**  
**Sex with High Risk Partners (Q78-Q80)**

	Male (n=180) n (%)	Female (n=90) n (%)	Total (n=270) n (%)
<i>How likely is it that you have had sex with someone who has used a needle to inject illegal drugs into his or her body?</i>			
It is not likely at all.	121 (88.3)	65 (82.3)	186 (86.1)
It is somewhat likely.	9 ( 6.6)	6 ( 7.6)	15 ( 6.9)
It is very likely.	3 ( 2.2)	3 ( 3.8)	6 ( 2.8)
It definitely has happened.	4 ( 2.9)	5 ( 6.3)	9 ( 4.2)
Total	137 (100)	79 (100)	216 <sup>a</sup> (100)
<i>How likely is it that you ever had sex with someone who has had a sexually transmitted disease?</i>			
It is not likely at all.	117 (77.5)	45 (57.0)	162 (70.4)
It is somewhat likely.	21 (13.9)	17 (21.5)	38 (16.5)
It is very likely.	4 ( 2.7)	7 ( 8.9)	11 ( 4.8)
It definitely has happened.	9 ( 6.0)	10 (12.7)	19 ( 8.3)
Total	151 (100)	79 (100)	230 <sup>b</sup> (100)
<i>How likely is it that you ever had sex with someone who has HIV?</i>			
It is not likely at all.	129 (89.0)	62 (80.5)	191 (86.0)
It is somewhat likely.	11 ( 7.6)	9 (11.7)	20 ( 9.0)
It is very likely.	3 ( 2.1)	4 ( 5.2)	7 ( 3.2)
It definitely has happened.	2 ( 1.4)	2 ( 2.6)	4 ( 1.8)
Total	145 (100)	77 (100)	222 <sup>c</sup> (100)

Note: The number of respondents who checked “I have never had sex”: <sup>a</sup>36 (14%) ; <sup>b</sup>28 (11%) ; <sup>c</sup>36 (14%). If the answers of those who said “I never had sex” were indeed meant to be “Not likely at all”, it would change the percentage responding to “Not likely at all” to the following: <sup>a</sup>222 (88.1%); <sup>b</sup>190 (73.6%); <sup>c</sup>227 (88.0%).

These results need to be interpreted with some degree of caution for the following reason. The results reported in Table 8.22 are those that were provided by sexually active respondents (N=270). However, between 11% and 14% of respondents checked the response “I have never had sex” when they arrived at these three questions. The most likely explanation for this occurrence is that many of these respondents meant to say “I have never had sex with someone who injected illegal drugs, etc.” and instead of responding “It is not likely at all”, they responded “I have never had sex.” If this is the case, the actual percentage of those saying “It is not likely at all” would be higher and the rest of the answers would be correspondingly lower. Fortunately, as noted at the bottom of Table 8.22 the difference is only a few percentage points.

#### **M. Health Care Seeking Behavior and STDs**

Over a third of the sexually active respondents (34.2%) said they had sought health care information one or more times because they thought they had a sexually transmitted disease. Likewise, a third (32.8%) of the respondents also said that they had gone to see a doctor, nurse, or health worker because they thought they had an STD.

When asked whether a health professional had ever told them that they had an STD, 15.2% of the respondents said they had been told they had an STD on one or more occasion. The most common STD respondents were diagnosed with was chlamydia (5.0%), followed by ‘other STDs’ (3.0%), herpes (2.7%), gonorrhea (1.7%), syphilis (1.0%), and genital warts (0.3%). No respondents reported having been told that they had HIV infection or AIDS.

**Table 8.23**

**Have you ever sought health care information because you thought you had a sexually transmitted disease (STD)? (Q81)**

	Males (n=180)		Females (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
No	127	(72.2)	44	(52.4)	171	(65.8)
Yes, one time	35	(19.9)	29	(34.5)	64	(24.6)
Yes, more than one time	14	( 7.8)	11	(13.1)	25	( 9.6)
Total	176	(100)	84	(100)	260	(100)

**Table 8.24**

**Have you ever gone to see a doctor, nurse, or health worker because you thought you had a sexually transmitted disease (STD)? (Q82)**

	Males (n=180)		Females (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
No	132	(75.0)	43	(51.2)	175	(67.3)
Yes, one time	33	(18.8)	29	(34.5)	62	(23.9)
Yes, more than one time	11	( 6.3)	12	(14.3)	23	( 8.9)
Total	176	(100)	84	(100)	260	(100)

**Table 8.25**

**Has a doctor, nurse, or health worker ever told you that you had a sexually transmitted disease such as genital herpes, genital warts, chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, AIDS, or HIV infection? (Q83)**

	Males (n=180)		Females (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
No	156	(88.6)	59	(70.3)	215	(82.7)
Yes, one time	14	( 8.0)	18	(21.4)	32	(12.3)
Yes, more than one time	6	( 3.4)	7	( 8.3)	13	( 5.0)
Total	176	(100)	84	(100)	260	(100)

**Table 8.26**

**What type (of STD) did you have? (Q84)**

	Males (n=202)		Females (n=100)		Total (n=302)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Never had a STD	181	(89.6)	80	(80.0)	261	(86.4)
Chlamydia	3	( 1.5)	12	(12.0)	15	( 5.0)
Other	5	( 2.5)	4	( 4.0)	9	( 3.0)
Genital Herpes	6	( 2.97)	2	( 2.0)	8	( 2.7)
Gonorrhea	4	( 2.0)	1	( 1.0)	5	( 1.7)
Syphilis	3	( 1.5)	0	( 0.0)	3	( 1.0)
Genital warts	0	( 0.0)	1	( 1.0)	1	( 0.3)
AIDS or HIV infection	0	( 0.0)	0	( 0.0)	0	( 0.0)
Total	202	(100)	100	(100)	302	(100)

\* Respondents were instructed to mark the most recent sexually transmitted disease.

## 9. HIV/AIDS TESTING AND PERCEPTION OF RISK

### Overview

*Only 34% of the sexually active youth that stated they “know all they need to know about HIV/AIDS” used a condom everytime*

One of the principle objectives of the OHYS is to determine the potential HIV risk of youth that are from high-risk environments. In addition to the behavioral questions typically used to assess risk, youth have been asked to address some environmental and contextual questions that might lead to high exposure situations and placing them at increased risk. This section addresses the youth's HIV testing behaviors and asks the youth to self assess their level of exposure to HIV and AIDS.

### A. HIV/AIDS Information

The majority (85.2%) of youth said they had been taught about--or given information about--HIV and AIDS in school, but far fewer had talked about HIV/AIDS with their parents or guardians (65.8%).

**Table 9.1**  
**Have you ever been taught or given information about AIDS or HIV infection in school? (Q85)**

	Male(n=215)		Female (n=113)		Total (n=328)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Yes	169	(82.4)	96	(90.6)	265	(85.2)
No	28	(13.7)	9	( 8.5)	37	(11.9)
Not sure	8	( 3.9)	1	( 0.9)	9	( 2.9)
Total	205	(100)	106	(100)	311	(100)

**Have you talked about AIDS or HIV infection with your parents or guardians? (Q86)**

	Male(n=215)		Female (n=113)		Total (n=328)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Yes	134	(65.4)	70	(66.7)	204	(65.8)
No	62	(30.2)	34	(32.4)	96	(31.0)
Not sure	9	( 4.4)	1	( 1.0)	10	( 3.2)
Total	205	(100)	105	(100)	310	(100)

Just over half of the youth (53.2%) said they know all they need to know about HIV/AIDS and 46.8% said they wished they knew more. Ironically, among the sexually active respondents who said they think they know all they need to know about HIV and AIDS, only 34% reported using condoms all the time.

**Table 9.2**  
**How much do you know about AIDS or HIV infection? (Q87)**

	Male(n=215)		Female (n=113)		Total (n=328)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
I wish I knew more	98	(47.6)	48	(45.3)	146	(46.8)
I know all I need to know	108	(52.4)	58	(54.7)	166	(53.2)
Total	206	(100)	106	(100)	312	(100)

An HIV/AIDS risk factor commonly cited is whether or not individuals know of acquaintances with HIV and AIDS. Of the youth surveyed, over half (54.5%) indicated that they know someone with HIV infection or AIDS. Females were more likely than males to have known someone with HIV or AIDS, 61.9% to 50.7% respectively.

**Table 9.3**  
**Have you ever known someone with HIV infection or AIDS? (Q88)**

	Male(n=215)		Female (n=113)		Total (n=328)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Yes	104	(50.7)	65	(61.9)	169	(54.5)
No	101	(49.3)	40	(38.1)	141	(45.5)
Total	205	(100)	105	(100)	310	(100)

## **B. HIV Testing**

Analysis of the HIV testing question is reported here for sexually active respondents only. The results indicate that one-third of sexually active respondents had never been tested for HIV; another third had been tested for HIV once; and a third said they were tested more than once. Four percent said they weren't sure if they had been tested. Among those who had been tested, 80.5% said that they had gotten the results.

**Table 9.4**  
**Have you ever been tested for HIV (blood test, saliva test)? (Q89)**

	Male (n=180)		Female (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
No	68	(38.6)	19	(22.4)	87	(33.3)
Yes, once	55	(31.3)	32	(37.7)	87	(33.3)
Yes, more than once	46	(26.1)	31	(36.5)	77	(29.5)
Don't know	7	(4.0)	3	(3.5)	10	(3.8)
Total	176	(100)	85	(100)	261	(100)

**Did you get or find out the results of your test? (Q90)**

	Males (n=58)		Females (n=66)		Total (n=174)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
No, I did not get the results	18	(16.7)	10	(15.2)	28	(16.1)
Yes, I did get the results	86	(79.6)	54	(81.8)	140	(80.5)
I don't know if I have been tested for HIV	4	(3.7)	2	(3.0)	6	(3.5)
Total	108	(100)	66	(100)	174	(100)

### C. Concern about HIV/AIDS and Perception of One's Risk

*A majority of the youth surveyed indicated concern about getting AIDS (69%) and nearly half agreed with the statement "Things I have done in the past have put me at high risk of getting AIDS."*

In response to the statement 'I worry about getting AIDS', 47.7% of the sexually active respondents said that they 'strongly agreed' and another 20.9% said they 'agreed.' When the inverse of this statement was presented, 'I won't worry about AIDS unless I get it', the respondents' answers were consistent with the first one: 45.7% 'strongly disagreed' with the statement and 33.3% 'disagreed.' Finally, when asked to respond to the statement, 'I don't think I will live long enough to worry about getting AIDS', over 80% either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed', leaving 18.3% of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

**Table 9.5**  
**Concern About AIDS (Q91a-91d)**

	Males (n=180)		Females (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<i>I worry about getting AIDS.</i>						
Strongly agree	87	(50.0)	36	(42.8)	123	(47.7)
Agree	38	(21.8)	16	(19.1)	54	(20.9)
Disagree	29	(16.7)	17	(20.2)	46	(17.8)
Strongly disagree	20	(11.5)	15	(17.9)	35	(13.6)
Total	174	(100)	84	(100)	258	(100)
<i>Things I have done in the past have put me at high risk of getting AIDS.</i>						
Strongly agree	37	(21.1)	24	(28.9)	61	(23.6)
Agree	36	(20.6)	20	(24.1)	56	(21.7)
Disagree	47	(26.9)	15	(18.1)	62	(24.0)
Strongly disagree	55	(31.4)	24	(28.9)	79	(30.6)
Total	175	(100)	83	(100)	258	(100)
<i>I won't worry about AIDS unless I get it.</i>						
Strongly agree	14	( 8.1)	6	( 7.1)	20	( 7.8)
Agree	23	(13.2)	11	(13.1)	34	(13.2)
Disagree	63	(36.2)	23	(27.4)	86	(33.3)
Strongly disagree	74	(42.5)	44	(52.4)	118	(45.7)
Total	174	(100)	84	(100)	258	(100)
<i>I don't think I will live long enough to worry about getting AIDS.</i>						
Strongly agree	14	( 8.1)	4	( 4.8)	18	( 7.0)
Agree	23	(13.3)	6	( 7.1)	29	(11.3)
Disagree	53	(30.6)	28	(33.3)	81	(31.5)
Strongly disagree	83	(48.0)	46	(54.8)	129	(50.2)
Total	173	(100)	84	(100)	257	(100)

While the sexually active youth who participated in this survey were clearly concerned about HIV infection and AIDS, they did not necessarily believe that they had engaged in behavior that would put them at high risk. When posed with the statement, 'Things I have done in the past have put me at high risk of getting AIDS', the highest percentage of respondents said that they 'strongly disagreed' (30.6%) and the next highest group said that they 'disagreed' (24.0%) with this statement. Overall, less than half of the sexually active youth (45.3%) felt that they had engaged in practices which put them at high risk for AIDS. Females were more

likely than males to agree with the statement that they were at high risk for getting AIDS given the things they had done in the past as 53.0% of the females 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement compared to 41.7% of the males.

*The majority of youth (66%) indicated that it was not likely at all that they would get AIDS*

The sexually active youth who participated in this survey felt that they were less likely to get AIDS than someone they knew. Sixty-six percent said that they were not likely to get AIDS at all, and 26.4% said it was 'somewhat likely,' with only 5.0% saying that they felt it was very likely and 2.7% that it 'definitely will happen.' In contrast, almost 30% of the sexually active youth thought that someone they knew was 'very likely' or 'definitely' would get AIDS. Thirty nine percent said that someone they knew was 'somewhat likely' to get AIDS, and 32.2% said that someone they knew was not likely to get AIDS at all.

**Table 9.6**  
**How likely is it that someone you know will get AIDS? (Q92)**

	Male (n=180)		Female (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
It is not likely at all	62	(35.0)	22	(26.2)	84	(32.2)
It is somewhat likely	73	(41.2)	28	(33.3)	101	(38.7)
It is very likely	30	(17.0)	23	(27.4)	53	(20.3)
It definitely will happen	12	( 6.8)	11	(13.1)	23	( 8.8)
Total	177	(100)	84	(100)	261	(100)

**Table 9.7**  
**How likely is it that you will get AIDS? (Q93)**

	Male (n=180)		Female (n=90)		Total (n=270)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
It is not likely at all	124	(70.1)	48	(57.1)	172	(65.9)
It is somewhat likely	41	(23.2)	28	(33.3)	69	(26.4)
It is very likely	8	( 4.5)	5	( 6.0)	13	( 5.0)
It definitely will happen	4	( 2.3)	3	( 3.6)	7	( 2.7)
Total	177	(100)	84	(100)	261	(100)

## 10. CLOSING THOUGHTS

The findings of this survey confirm that the lives of these 'out-of-home' youth are characterized by a lack of family support, physical and emotional abuse, drug use and unsafe sexual behaviors. The experiences and behaviors of these youth place them at high risk for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. Not only had the majority of the youth surveyed reported being sexually active, many also reported experiencing sex at very young ages, being sexually abused, having multiple sexual partners, and inadequately using protection. On the positive side, the findings indicate that these youth are approachable. While this is a group that has been rejected, abandoned or abused by parents or other adults, a large number of respondents indicated trusting their parents and other adults (63% and 58% respectively). Furthermore, these youth indicate a desire for obtaining more information about HIV/AIDS. Many are concerned since they sense that they are at risk themselves. These beliefs and attitudes provide the necessary fertile ground for prevention interventions among this highly vulnerable sub-population of adolescents.

Given the complex natures of these youths' lives, there are no clear or simple solutions. Clearly their risk of HIV and AIDS is high. However, other issues such as family support, home stability, emotional anchoring and positive modeling are also undeniable factors that influence their behaviors, their health and their well-being. At a minimum, educational programs and interventions need to be developed to address the specific and immediate needs of these out-of-home youth. Ideally, creative strategies should be supported and/or developed that will provide the opportunities needed for these youth to address the challenges they face, advance developmentally and become productive and healthy citizens